THE DISCOVERY OF THE ETRUSCANS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: SOME ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

Ronald T. Ridley

INTRODUCTION

When Giuseppe Miceli published his epoch-making book L'Italia avanti il dominio dei Romani in 1810, in the magnificent volume of illustrations there appeared only the walls and gates at Volterra, some bronzes and gems, and the cinerary urns of the Guarneri Museum at Volterra. Only two or three of the great underground painted tombs of Tarquinia were known.1

In truth, the Tarquilia tomb and the Tomb of the Cardinal had been discovered at Tarquinia in 1699, and excavations at Volterra from the 1720s led to the founding of the Guarneri Museum in 1750, but one should not forget the even earlier finds at Arezzo: the Chimera (1553), Minerva (1554) and Arringatore (1566), and from Priene the Icormon Cist (1738). These finds are, however, only one part of the story. The other is the amazing outpouring of scholarship not only describing the collections but also grappling with the most fundamental questions of Etruscan history and culture: Thomas Dampier’s De Etruria Regali Libri Septem (written 1616–19, published 1723–4, with 93 plates); Antonio Gori’s Musei Guarnerri monumenta etrusca (1744), Museum Etruscanum (1737–41) and Museum Cortonense (1750); Mario Guarneri’s Origini italiche (3 vols; 1767–72); Giovanni Battista Passeri’s Picturae Etruscorum (the Gualtieri collection) (1767–75); and Luigi Lanzi’s Saggi di lingua etrusca (1789) and De’ vasi antichi dipinti volgarmente chiamati Etruschi (1806).

All of this was transformed, however, by the discovery of tombs at Vulci by shepherds in 1827, which for the first time revealed the amazing wealth of the Etruscans. Specialist works on this city usually provide some historical introduction in a few pages on the story of the excavations, but always, it seems, based on published sources. The real account is buried in the Archivio di Stato di Roma.2

The discoveries at Vulci made by the shepherds were exploited illegally by the Prussian chargé d’affaires, Wilhelm Dorow. He was pardoned, however, when he gave at least part of his finds to the State.3 Excited by the spectacular finds, a company was set up in 1828 to excavate with a licence; it consisted of the Candelori (lessors of Camposeca),4 Vincenzo Campanari (Fig. 1)5 and Melchiorre Fossati. The licence was granted on 22 August, and excavations began on 13 October 1828. The result of this first year’s work was a collection purchased by the Vatican for 4,500 scudi in January 1829.

These Campanari excavations were to continue for a decade, but the story is one of endless scandal and illegality. The original partners fell out almost immediately over the division of the spoils. The Candelori actually broke into the store at Santa Chiara in Rome, to which only Campanari and Fossati had keys, and removed the collection to their own palace.

The papal minister in charge of antiquities was the Camerlengo, at this time Cardinal Pier Francesco Galleffi (Fig. 2). He never trusted Campanari, who had been guilty of ‘grave demerits’ in the past. There were constant delays in the renewal of his licences. In February 1832, for example, Galleffi refused to renew Campanari’s licence because of unauthorized restorations to vases. In June 1833 Campanari was accused of selling finds, especially the best pieces, to foreign collectors, such as Beaufort and Durand. The Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti, which had been established in 1816 to assist the Camerlengo in the control of excavations, exports and purchases of antiquities, refused to select any material for the museums, because it was unwilling to take only ‘leftovers’. When the Commissione visited to view the finds of 1830–1 in the Palazzo Giustiniani,
they found total chaos, and some items had been sent off to a restorer called Rosi, who refused to return them. Other finds were lying about in complete disorder on the floor, covered in dust. As well, Fossati decamped in March 1831, taking a ‘significant quantity’ of the antiquities with him. The year before he had been accused of selling pieces to the Marquis of Northampton.

In 1835, however, the Papal Government incredibly formed a joint company with Campanari to carry on the excavations, relying on the simple logic that it was thus entitled automatically to a share in the finds instead of having to buy them. The contract was signed on 16 January 1835, and laid down that the costs, estimated at 4,000–5,000 scudi per year, were to be shared. As well, the Government was to pay Campanari 1,000 scudi each year for the right to participate in his excavation. As for the sharing of the finds, one side was to divide them into two equal parts, and the other party was to have the choice of which half it wanted. The Government still had the right to buy anything of special merit from Campanari’s share.

These excavations closed in December 1837. They were marred by scandal. Surveillance must have been minimal, with workers and collectors having a free hand, since in 1836 the supervisor, Arvedoro Buontrombone, was dismissed for ‘very bad conduct’. It transpires that he had been a soldier, with a list of punishments a page long. All of this, however, was nothing in comparison to the sequel, which broke in 1837.

**KING LUDWIG OBTAINS HIS VASES**

On 24 November 1837, King Ludwig I of Bavaria (Fig. 3) applied directly to Pope Gregory XVI for the right to export his Etruscan collection to Munich. Which collection? Why, the one he had bought from the Candelori, in contravention of Cardinal Gallelli’s orders, in 1831.

From the first discoveries, the Candelori had received offers from people like King Ludwig and the Duke de Blacas, French Ambassador and first President of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, who were willing to pay up to 25,000 scudi for the 1829 finds that the Commissione valued at 5,000.

Yielding first place to none was King Ludwig. In April 1829 he was in Rome, and what nicer memento of his visit could there have been than three vases from the Candelori collection in the Vatican Museums. Might he even have hinted what would have pleased him most? The Segretario di Stato, Cardinal Giuseppe Albani, told his colleague Gallelli that the King had demonstrated a ‘mania’ to have some of the newly-found Etruscan vases. There were surely some duplicates that he could have; if possible, those with painted decoration, or some signed by the painter. Pope Pius VIII had personally pointed out how grateful the King would be. He had, moreover, given to the Vatican Museums casts of the Aegina sculptures, so that this
would be simply a return gesture. It was conveniently overlooked that the casts had in fact been given in return for the cession in 1819 of the \textit{Barberini Faun}. It seemed, however, that three vases worthy of the King but that would not deplete the papal collection could not be found. Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino, was therefore asked to produce them from his collection. He chose one mended in antiquity (a fashionable collector's item) and two 'signed' vases by 'Pythia' and Andokides. The Bavarian collection made in this way a modest beginning.\footnote{6}

It was in July 1830 that the Candelori asked permission to sell the King sixteen vases for 4,000 scudi. They were admitted to be 'bonded' pieces (that is, reserved by the Commissione for ultimate purchase), but it was promised that they would remain in Rome. The Candelori boldly alluded to the Pacca Edict of 1820, which had aimed to encourage excavations: if this sale were not allowed, that would not happen. Public interest would not be damaged in any way. The King's agent, Johann Martin von Wagner, promised to obey the laws. Moreover, all property rights included that of alienation: if pictures and sculptures could be sold, why not vases? Even bolder reference might be made to such notorious recent episodes as that of Douglas, tenth Duke of Hamilton, who had been allowed to 'extract his share', despite contravention of the law.\footnote{7} The Candelori asked less, only that foreigners in Rome might have their share. Gallelli refused permission. The contract was, nevertheless, signed, in June 1831, for 15,000 scudi. The collection included fifteen vases and twelve items in gold. The Candelori later claimed that the Government had declined the offer to buy it. In fact, it had been unable to pay the inflated price asked, but had reserved individual pieces.

The collection was then transferred from the Palazzo Candelori to the Villa Malta. When this was made known, Antonio Candelori was called to court, where he denied on oath that any sale had been made, and claimed that the move was only to make room and save rent. He swore that he was an ardent patriot who would never harm his beloved Rome by alienating such treasures. He even asked the Camerlengo to send agents to seal the bonded pieces. The Candelori were later to use this as the basis of their claim that the Camerlengo knew and approved of the transfer to the villa. Out of the collection of 590 items, 332 were bonded. In August 1831, Gallelli wrote to the Segretario di Stato, alarmed at the transfer of the collection to the villa, where it was in the hands of the King's agent, Wagner. He suspected from what he already knew of him that the items would be spirited out of the city in some way. Gallelli recalled with bitterness the case of the \textit{Barberini Faun} and noted the 'bad faith' of the Candelori.

Despite all this, in 1834 the Candelori gave Pope Gregory XVI the famous \textit{Exekias Vase} and as a result, in November 1835, were ennobled as marquises. The story was revealed, as we have seen, in 1837. As a personal favour to King Ludwig, the pope granted the export licence.

Threatened with a fine that might well amount to 50,000 scudi for the vases alone, without taking into
consideration the gold also sold illegally and the criminal deceit involved, which amounted to perjury, the Candelori had the temerity to offer to give up their excavation 'rights' for ten years in place of the fine. This offer was set out in the form of an outrageous calculation of financial gains for the Government, based on the value of the finds that they could expect to make.

The full revelation of the mentality of the Candelori, however, came with the manifesto dated 15 January 1838, in which they announced their plan to continue the excavations. They called on all 'lovers and promoters of antiquity' to join with them in excavating the whole of the ancient city of Vulci. Their address was given as the Palazzo Cavalieri, Via de' Barbieri. They had friends in the highest quarters. In February, the Minister of Bavaria in Rome intervened with the Segretario di Stato, Cardinal Brunelleschi, to drop the case against the Candelori, on the grounds that it might involve the King. Galleffi replied to Brunelleschi that it concerned only the Candelori. They, in turn, claimed that the whole case was simply a vendetta against them by the secretary of the Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti, Luigi Grifi, and the new Commissario delle Antichità, Carlo Fenà's successor, Pietro Ercole Viscomiti, who had taken up office in 1836.

**THE PRINCE OF CANINO MAKES HIS OWN RULES**

In December 1828, Lucien Bonaparte, the 'Principe di Canino' (Fig. 4), wrote to Cardinal Galleffi reporting that he had made a few finds in his excavations at Vulci, for which he had been given a licence in September. The objects were mostly broken, but he was bringing them to Rome, to Palazzo Gabrielli, for the Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti to inspect them. From such modest beginnings arose yet another archaeological scandal.

It transpired that there were 200 vases on show, mostly red-figure ware, in comparison with the predominantly black-figure ware of the Candelori collection. The Commissione agreed that they should be joined with that collection to form a museum. In that way, the museum would then have only to buy special pieces. Prices had in fact been reduced dramatically already by the flooding of the market.

The vases needed restoration. Much can be learned about this craft in Rome at this time from the records of the Commissione. There were four experts available: Francesco Depoletti,7 Rosi, Carlo Ruspi8 and the mosaicist Bocchigiani. The Commissione devised a neat test: all four were to be given two vases, both needing the same time to restore, and then the results and prices were to be compared. It was suggested by the Commissione, however, that the real experts for this kind of work could be found only in Naples.

There was a special trip to see the collection and the excavations in progress. On 30 May 1829 some six members of the Commissione made the five hours' journey to Civitavecchia, where they were entertained by the Prince and Princess at Musignano. They were amazed at the room upon room full of the most beauti-
ful vases, with another gallery for the bronzes. There followed a visit to Cuccumella, which was being ‘completely cleared’ (read, ransacked), and there was a show excavation of two tombs, named after Pacca and the Commissione.

The Commissione was interested to note the way in which the Prince was restoring bases, gluing the pieces together and filling in the gaps with a paste made from crushed ‘unimportant pieces’. The whole vases numbered 550. The members were alarmed at what criticism there would be if this collection, so much better than that at Naples, were missed, but did not know how to pay for it. The Prince’s taxes might be reduced, or he might be offered some state land. This was the clever solution: if he unduly raised the price of the vases, the Commissione could increase the value set on the land.

Then came the not unexpected intervention from on high. In July the Segretario di Stato, Cardinal Albani, wrote to Galleffi on the Prince’s behalf. He wished, it seemed, to sell abroad a mere 100 vases. In compensation, he had set aside 25 very precious ones for the Government, ‘at a price to be arranged by common agreement’. The Camerlengo’s reply of 14 July is memorable, and makes exhilarating reading. The hand behind it must be that of Carlo Fia, the Commissario delle Antichità.

Galleffi began by setting out the laws, emphasizing that the Pacca Edict of 1820 relinquished the State’s rights in the matter of antiquities in return for having first choice of any pieces and the right to seal them even for eventual purchase. If the Prince had selected pieces for sale before the Government had exercised its option, he was guilty of contravention of the laws, and was subject to their penalties.

He then proceeded to lecture the Segretario di Stato on antiquities. These Etruscan finds were important not only as art but also as historical sources. The vases would also complement Rome’s unrivalled collections of sculpture and painting. And what would be said of a government that allowed such treasures to be exported when ‘the learned world from one end to the other’ was discussing them? Turning to a more personal level, Galleffi asked how it was possible for the Segretario to countenance such a loss when he came from a family famous for its love of antiquity and its own collections. Such conduct was in contrast to that of the Camerlengo, who was working night and day to enrich the Museums and prevent the loss of anything worthy to be preserved in them.

If the Prince were allowed to export the best 100 vases, Galleffi continued, how could anyone else be refused the same right, especially the Bavarians. The offer of 25 vases in compensation might be taken as an insult if one did not know the Prince’s ‘courtesy’. What status as an expert did he have to make the choice? What compensation were 25 for 100, especially when he was anticipating a price of 100,000 scudi for that 100? Under no circumstances, Galleffi concluded, was the licence to be granted. How typical that such people tried to evade the laws and use their influence with other sections of the Government.

The response was astounding. Albani conveyed Galleffi’s views to Pius VIII, who demanded that the
Vatican Museums immediately choose what was wanted, so that the Prince could then do what he wanted with the rest, including exporting them.

At the end of August, Francesco Pelagii, the Prince’s agent, announced that the collection had arrived at the Palazzo Gabrielli at Monte Giordano. The Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti was divided into three groups in view of the complexity of the task before them, to classify and choose. The visits began in September and took two weeks in all. The commissioners chose 168 objects of first-class merit valued at 150 scudi each (25,200), 129 of second-class at 75 (9,675), 112 of third-class and five of the fourth, all at 37.50 (4,200 and 187), in all 39,262 scudi. On 12 October the members met to discuss the choices and prices. There was unanimous agreement about everything. A list was to be drawn up of objects not to be exported, which included, of course, the 100 vases that the Prince had set aside and that were at the palazzo of Cardinal Fesch, Napoleon’s uncle, living in Rome since the restoration of the Bourbons.

In December, Albani again wrote to Galleffi concerning what he called the Prince’s ‘very just request’ that he be allowed to dispose freely of what the Museums did not want. His appeals were characterized as ‘very strong’. Galleffi replied that cataloguing the vases was very complicated; it was in fact finished in February 1830.

Precisely as these legal procedures were completed, on 17 February 1830, the Prince wrote to Galleffi saying that the Commissione had chosen the very best vases, but that he had already been offered 100,000 scudi for the 100 at Fesch’s palace by Donato in Florence. He stated bluntly that he would keep these prize vases for himself until either the Government offered him the same price or he were allowed to export them. For all the other objects that the Commissione had chosen, so great was his wish to see them in the Vatican Museums that he was prepared to sacrifice them for 100,000 scudi.

Galleffi’s reply was a masterpiece, and very restrained. Certainly the law allowed the Prince to keep whatever he wanted, but they could not be sold abroad and a list had to be provided. He had, however, already contravened the law by transferring some things to the Palazzo Fesch. As for the Government having to pay 100,000 scudi for the 100 vases and the same price again for the rest of what the Commissione had chosen, that was unacceptable. The Government would pay 39,000 scudi for what had been selected. The laws laid down that the price offered be reason-

able, in other words as established by the Commissione. Its members, the Prince was reminded, performed their duties without pay, and were ‘the most respectable group of experts in Rome’. He himself had accepted their valuation of a collection of sculpture in 1822. In conclusion, Galleffi clearly enunciated higher principles: no private person should complain if the Government wished to buy art for public edification, and even less so when the Government waived its own fiscal rights for the advantage of such private owners.

It was then that the Prince’s dishonesty was fully revealed, as if it were not already blatant. In March 1830 he requested the right to export 40 vases to Florence, assuring the Camerlengo that no reserved vases were among them. Three members of the Commissione went to examine them. The list provided gave only numbers, with no description, and they were hidden within the collection. When they were found, no fewer than ten were revealed as reserved. The Prince then had the audacity, after putting the Commissione to such trouble, to ask it to approve 50 vases for export. Galleffi accused him of lying, but amazingly sent the three members of the Commissione again four days later. This time they found only two reserved vases, and so allowed 48 to go. One can only be amazed at their expertise in detecting so many frauds among the chaos deliberately created by the Prince. The value of the vases to be exported was not increased then by the Commissione but remained at a derisory 418 scudi. The exporter thus paid virtually no tax, but clearly counted on vastly inflated prices in Florence. He was in April allowed to send off another 97 vases.

The members of the Commissione had been treated as fools by the Prince, but had operated by the strict letter of the law, and even with considerable generosity. His response revealed much. In May he wrote to Galleffi, declaring roundly that the value set on his collection was unworthy of artists and educated men. It was a ‘gratuitous irony’, an attempt to impose on the ‘religion and fairness’ of the Camerlengo. His own valuation was very low compared with the prices such art fetched in Naples and Paris. He was out of patience, and breaking off all negotiations. In a mixture of irony and bluff, he claimed that he would sell them within the Papal States, as the law allowed. In an attempt to give himself credentials as a scholar, rather than a mere trader in antiquities, he was pleased to include copies of his catalogue.11

This hardly compared with his letter of 3 June,
which one might describe as that of someone mentally unhinged. He accused Galleffi of not listening to anything he said: he wanted to sell 2,623 pieces, not 329, and their value was 380 scudi each, not 150 (a total of 996,740 scudi). How could the father of a family be deprived of his property? The Government offered him 150 or even 37 scudi for each piece, when he could get 1,000. He announced that he intended to inform public opinion throughout Europe how the Government cheapened Etruscan antiquities. He would ask the pope to allow the export of what the Commission so scorned. He concluded by accusing the Government of acting like that of Egypt, infamous for its monopolies.

Galleffi’s reply calmly asserted that if anyone else had written him such a letter he would not deign to respond. Instead, he most courteously reassured that the Government’s only purpose was ‘public ornament and instruction’.

As good as his word, the Prince tried again to go over Galleffi’s head. Albani wrote again to Galleffi on his behalf. The Prince was raising, as he described it, a ‘clamour’ about the price offered to him, and resorting ‘energetically’ to the pope, who had asked Albani to attempt an accommodation. The Segretario’s suggested solution was outrageous: that the existing list of reserved items be divided in two, namely those really reserved, but which were to form the Prince’s own museum, and the rest, which could be exported. And for this granting of carte blanche to do as he wanted with everything, Albani suggested that it would be better to choose a new group of experts.

Galleffi’s reply was another masterpiece of restraint and logic. First, the Prince had known the conditions when he had applied for the licence (a devastating demolition of his whole case). Second, he could not claim that he was not allowed to export what the Government did not regard as indispensable. He had already exported many items, and the Government chose only 414 pieces out of 2,000. Why did he not export the rest? Third, a new panel of experts would by definition be inferior to the first, because all the best were already members of the Commissione. In conclusion, it was revealed that the Prince had not sold a single vase sent to Florence, because the prices he was asking were thought laughable.

The Etruscan collection of Lucien Bonaparte was in fact dispersed all over Europe, especially to Paris and Munich, but some can be found in the Vatican Museums. Stendhal estimated Canino’s profit to 1840 at 1,200,000 francs.\(^{12}\)

**EXCAVATIONS AT BOMARZO**

A perfect example of Etruscan excavations in these years, and one on which we have some detail,\(^{13}\) is at Bomarzo. The owner of the local coffee-shop, Domenico Ruggeri, the head of a large family, began work in October 1830. He is described as an ‘uneducated person’ and therefore kept no records of interest to an antiquarian. Typical is 65 items, found in four tombs, and mostly called simply *tazze* (little cups). The finds were, however, so valuable that by December the ubiquitous Vincenzo Campanari paid 800 scudi to be admitted as an associate. And as early as the beginning of the next year enquiries were being made to see if Ruggeri had been selling anything, but nothing was discovered in Viterbo. His licence was therefore reissued.

In August 1831 Ruggeri reported on the first season (October 1830–June 1831). The excavations had uncovered ‘many beautiful’ objects — vases, bronzes, funerary urns. Ruggeri confessed that he had received many offers for these, and he admitted that he needed money to continue. He therefore offered the Government all or part of his finds.

A report was also made by the auxiliary (provincial) Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti at Viterbo in January 1832. It is enough to make one’s hair stand on end. One hundred and fifty tombs had been discovered and cleared. The necropolis was on a slope between the Tiber and the stream of the Vezza, some two miles from Mugnano, three from Bomarzo and seven from Ferento. The idea to excavate came when Ruggeri saw some vases found by the Prince of Canino at Vulci. The Commissione stated firmly, however, that his motives were far from vulgar. He found others to finance the work, and cleverly obtained permission from the landowners. (One wonders what the arguments were that were used when these arrangements were made.) The Commissione admitted that it was not sure that all items found had been reported, but if anything had been lost, that was not entirely Ruggeri’s fault. The Government inspector, one Michele Piermarini, visited only once or twice, and simply signed ‘seen’ on the bottom of the lists. What had he seen: the excavations, the objects found, or the lists? It was noted also that after Campanari joined, all objects were deposited in confusion in the store.

Ruggeri may have been without culture, but was not without needs. The Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti met in Rome in April 1832 to consider his claim for 5,000 scudi for the items chosen by the
Government for purchase. The bronzes were especially impressive. In July 1833 the Vatican Museums acquired three bronze vases, a candelabrum, a strainer and a set of armour for 200 scudi, and in October another set of armour for 400 scudi. It was obviously better not to rush such negotiations.14

ETRUSCAN FRAUD ON A LARGE SCALE

Since the late 1820s excavations had proceeded at a feverish pace in every location where one might expect to find traces of the ancient Etruscans. The motives were entirely mercenary, and in the early days there were vast fortunes to be made. The market soon, however, became flooded with vases and prices plummeted. It then became vital to get the material out of Italy, to countries where collectors were still willing to pay vast sums.15

In June 1832, the secretary of the Commissione Generale Consiluta di Belle Arti, Grifi, wrote to the President, Monsignor Gropell, with the first intimations that all was not well. The results of his enquiries were horrifying. The members of the auxiliary Commissione at Civitavecchia, for example, were ‘the first to traffic in objects that escape the vigilance of the law’. Names were produced: Feoli, Campanari and the Prince of Camino were not obeying the laws about reporting finds, even for large items, such as a chariot. Pietro Manzi, a judge in the contraband court and a member of the Commissione, ‘excavates, discovers, and sells in stealth, betraying the loyalty owed to his post’; he was at that time trying to sell six granite columns found at Tarquinia. The Prince had taken carloads of finds to the coast, to ship them out. Campanari had sent cases of finds to England and France, making a mockery of the Camerlengo’s laws.

Then there were the smaller fry. Avvoluta, Querciola, Falzacappa and Mariani all had vast personal collections of Etruscan antiquities, which they offered for sale to foreigners. When painted tombs were discovered, the paintings were removed and the tombs blown up to cover the criminals’ tracks. And Depoletti was continually restoring exquisite vases which then totally disappeared. The principal cause of all these difficulties was the fact that there was no one on the spot capable of assessing the finds.

Much of these comments was based on Grifi’s own experiences. He had often seen Etruscan material being restored in Roman workshops and the people there refused to tell him who owned it.

Cardinal Galleffi’s response was to send copies of this report to both Civitavecchia and Viterbo, asking the local authorities for explanations. The Commissione met on 7 August 1832 to consider the crisis. Those responsible were not, at first, named. It was resolved to send out someone intelligent (sic) to investigate. It was realized that there were no trustworthy people to supervise the excavations. It was known that some tombs had been blown up, and that inspectors did not visit the excavations but simply signed the reports. That was, of course, assuming that a licence had been sought and granted — and in many cases it had not.

In May 1833, Grifi made a further report, to Galleffi. The police investigations had revealed as the only criminals the Prince of Camino and Campanari. They had both excavated in places ‘most abundant in discoveries’, and had removed vast quantities of material; a local customs-official at Camposcalzo, one Rufini, had even been corrupted. The Prince was said to have found more than 20,000 items, the majority and best of which he had exported. Even the 100 reserved vases in the Palazzo Fesch were now in Florence. Campanari was known to have discovered fourteen notable bronzes, excellently preserved, some with figures on them, and one weighing 500 lbs, a set of armour inlaid with silver, and gold necklaces. None had been listed in his reports.

At the meeting of the Commissione on 21 June 1833, it was admitted that legal proof was still lacking against Campanari for the illegal sale of Etruscan antiquities, but that it was impossible to tolerate his scorn for the Government. It was decided to send people pretending to be buyers to obtain evidence. The Commissario delle Antichità, Fina, was also investigating in Rome, and would soon know if some objects were hidden near Sant’Ignazio.

In the light of this, it is amazing to find the Commissione in August considering buying a cista (cist) from Campanari. Overwhelmed by the proofs of clandestine sales, however, it was decided instead to put seals on his storeroom and to call him to account. The suggestion was approved that pottery from both the Campanari and Feoli collections should be requisitioned, equivalent to the export tax payable.

By the meeting in January 1834, however, Campanari had made a gift of bronzes to the Camerlengo to avoid prosecution. It was decided to wait until the end of the year to take action, depending on his conduct. In November, the Commissione
decided not to buy his whole collection, but only certain select pieces. The bronzes given to the Camerlengo were to be valued 'in expiation of his transgressions'. In December, it was agreed to buy only six or seven vases, notably that of Priam, valued at 500 scudi; the bronzes were valued at 800 scudi. These vases and bronzes were then valued together at 2,500 scudi, which was agreed to as a fine. All disputes between the Camerlengo and Campanari were thereupon regarded as settled. Gregory XVI had approved of the joint society for continued excavations. And that is where this retelling of history from the archives began.

CONCLUSION

These episodes reveal how glaringly at variance are the contemporary records in the archives with the anodyne, technical account found in most histories of Etruscosology, or the bare notes found in even specialist works on particular sites. For example, the doyen of French Etruscologists at the time, Jacques Heurgon, in 1973 delivered an address to the Académie des Inscriptions on precisely the early nineteenth-century discoveries. It was essentially a literary essay, beginning with Giuseppe Micali and his feud with Desiré Raoul-Rochette, turning to Stendhal and then to the painted tombs at Tarquinia and the argument between Baron von Stackelburg and Raoul-Rochette again, in which Dorow and the 80 years old Goethe also became involved. Heurgon's main source was an article by Fritz Weege. A second example is the admirable study of Vulci by Maria Falconi Amorelli, who provided a most detailed chronology of excavations. With only two archival exceptions, the bibliography is a very comprehensive collection of monographs and journals, notably the Bulletinino dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica, and the later Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità and Studi Etruschi. One cannot suggest that archival sources for the history of archaeology have not long been prized: one has only to think of Rodolfo Lanciani's Storia degli scavi, which began in 1902. And surely the attraction of the archives is obvious: here are the living human documents by the leading participants in the story.

On the other hand, their use does involve much labour, under conditions rather different from those in libraries and the consultation of published sources. There are also fundamental questions that must be addressed. The above account very obviously takes sides in many controversies. It is proper to ask how this can be justified. The answer is simple. In a copious collection of such documents, there is more than enough to allow an experienced historian to form judgements. Statements can be scrutinized internally for consistency and also cross-checked against others. There will be charge, countercharge and defence, and one can assess the evidence. And the major participants provide enough statements of their own for the historian to gain, test and confirm impressions, exactly as one does in real life. It would be impossible for any impartial reader of these documents not to be convinced, for example, that the Prince of Canino habitually lied and that his motives were primarily mercenary. Faced with a choice between the rodonomadé and self-incrimination of the Prince and the reason and manners of Galilei, one does not hesitate for a moment.

Something must also be said, in fairness, of the position of archaeology at this time in the early nineteenth century. It was still very much of a treasure hunt, as far as the excavators were concerned, and would continue to be so until the end of the century — and even beyond. On the other hand, Rome had had laws to protect her cultural patrimony since at least the fifteenth century, if not earlier. The city had also had museums since then: the Capitoline (1471), the Belvedere (1503). Although, therefore, for centuries before the 1820s there had been legislation to protect the cultural patrimony, a new era may be said to have dawned with the appointment of Carlo Fea as Commissario delle Antichità (1800–36), the first lawyer to hold the post, the draftsman of a new code (the Chirografi of 1802) and determined to uphold these laws. Major stimulus to this new code had been given by the depredations under the so-called Treaty of Tolentino (1797), but most of these deported works of art were returned in 1815. The next code, the Pacca Edict of 1820, was in turn influenced by that fact and seemed more generous to excavators. The Government, however, still had the right to purchase major pieces for museums at the prices established by the Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti. There was, on the other hand, no hindrance to the excavator's preferring to retain such pieces, although they could not be exported. It was, it must be stressed, not being laid down that nothing could be exported, that no one elsewhere had the right to admire any of the Italian finds. There was a vast selection for collectors such as Ludwig of Bavaria. The national museums were simply to retain the choicest pieces, and the legal
procedures were to be observed for sorting and evaluating such items. Any government then or now would insist on as much. The evidence of the archives is incontrovertible: the highest authorities were continually flouted.

Two fundamental principles were, in addition, being stressed by the Government in its difficult dealings with these excavators and collectors: these archaeological discoveries constituted vital evidence for history and art, and had to be treated accordingly; and the requirements of the state should take precedence over private persons' mania for collecting and profit.

There were, however, fortunes to be made, and locals of all classes instantly realized it, from the local aristocracy — or parvenus such as Lucien Bonaparte —, wealthy landowners and merchants to the very poor, such as the keeper of the local coffee-house.

These finds in Etruria were, by definition, out of the range of control of the Commissione Generale Consultiva di Belle Arti in Rome. One can have only the highest respect for the professional, unrelenting and unpaid labours of the Camerlengo's men, headed by the Commissario delle Antichità, Carlo Fea. Attempts were made already in 1816 to set up regional equivalents throughout the Papal States. The members perforce were local personalities, ranging from amateur antiquarians and municipal historians to those eminent socially and economically, who had more of an eye to their own profit. With the explosion of Etruscan discoveries, there was no organization capable of controlling the excavations or finds in anything like a scientific way.

The Commissione at Rome did its best to bring the criminals to book. It was defeated by a variety of devices. First and foremost, it must be admitted, there was the sheer audacity of the excavators, the dealers and their customers. Not even the pope could deny Ludwig of Bavaria anything he wanted. One would have thought that the Prince of Canino were the descendant of a long-established and most eminent house to hear his arrogant demands. As always, the poor Camerlengo was regarded by such people as a lesser figure in the papal bureaucracy, who could be bypassed. The man in this post in the late 1820s and early 1830s, Galleffi, comes through to us as a determined upholder of the law, undoubtedly fully supported and briefed by the paladin of the protection of the cultural patrimony, Fea. It was men like Albani, Segretario di Stato, who could be appealed to so successfully by the arrogant. And finally, the ultimate paradox: Gregory XVI was prepared to forgive notorious criminals like Campanari in order to enter into an agreement with them for joint excavations, reasoning that in this way the state would obtain the best pieces for the Vatican Museums at minimum cost. The major result was, in fact, the creation of the Gregorian Etruscan Museum in 1836. Its contents, however, must represent the mere 'leftovers', as the Commissione itself admitted, from the inestimable riches of those first discoveries.

2. Specialist studies of the city often give a history of the excavations: for example, A. Hus, Volci (Paris, 1971), 173–80. His chronology is based extensively on F. Messerschmidt, Nekropolen von Volci (Berlin, 1930), 2–12. More detailed is M. Falconi Amorelli, Volci (Rome, 1983), 11–17. The first excavations were in 1783, near Ponte della Badia, by Cardinal Pallotta. (This is, in fact, now to be emended to the Prado excavations, 1776–8: F. Buranelli, ‘Sì sarebbe potuta chiamare ‘dolcec’ la cultura villanoviana’, BMissPent 11 (1991), 5–50.) The first nineteenth-century ones were in 1828, by a company formed by Vincenzo Campanari, the Candelori brothers and Mecolliaca Fossati, from which the finds are scattered all over Europe. In the same year both Agostino Feoli and Lucien Bonaparte worked at Camposella and Ponte della Badia, and again the finds were sold all over Europe, not to mention Lucien Bonaparte at Camposella and Cucumella, ransacking enormous numbers of tombs. Then came the society formed between the Campanari and the Papal Government working at Camposella, which Falconi Amorelli dated 1833–8. On this we have now the splendid specialist work by F. Buranelli, Gli scavi a Volci della Società Vincenzo Campanari Governo Pontificio (1835–1837) (Rome, 1991), which does use the archives. (I am pleased to have found for Buranelli the original contract for the society, which had been very much misplaced in the archives.) The documentation of these finds is among the richest in the archives, with weekly reports of finds in many huge boxes: ASR, Camerlengio II (IV), 1601.4.

3. Wilhelm Dorow is an interesting person about whom it is hard to find any information. The following is derived from Neuer Nekaslog der Deutschen 23 (1845) (published 1847). He was born at Königsberg in 1790 and was trained as an architect. He then turned to trade with his uncle, but it did not suit him; he meanwhile studied mathematics and philology. In 1811 he went to France, where contacts in the Prussian Embassy opened a diplomatic career, but in 1812 he began military service with the Guards; he served in Poland and France; and became Director of the Allied Military Hospital in Frankfurt. By 1816 he was Secretary of the Legation in Dresden, then in 1817 in Copenhagen. After falling ill, he undertook excavations and was Director of Antiquities in Rhein-Westphalia 1820–2, in which capacity he founded the Bonn Museum. He was briefly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1822, before being pensioned. In 1827 he journeyed to Italy, where his name is to be remembered for these Etruscan beginnings; his great collection went to Berlin. He died at Halle in 1845. He published much, especially Etrurien und der Orient (Berlin, 1829).

4. The Candelori are not to be found in DBI, or even in the Archivio biografico italiano (microfiche).

5. Campanari cannot be found in either of the above biographical reference works. Not even Buranelli, Gli scavi a Volci (above, n. 2), 45, can offer much beyond his dates of birth and death (1772–1840). His son published an obituary in Albuin (1841), 163. There is now an entry in N. de Grammond, ed., An Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology I (New York, 1996), 224. Most interesting light is shed on him later by the story of his London exhibition in 1837; see G. Colonna, ‘Archaeologia dell’età romantica in Etruria’, Studi Etruschi 46 (1978), 81–117. The exhibition was at 121 Pall Mall, in the form of some eleven reconstructed tombs. The real purpose, however, is revealed to be not educational but commercial: the British Museum bought most of the items. How much of an innovation it was to show tomb interiors is doubtful: Gianbattista Belzoni had exhibited models of the tomb of the nineteenth dynasty pharaoh Seti I in Piccadilly in 1821.

6. ASR, Camerlengio II (IV), 197,1058.

7. Hamilton was allowed to export in 1825 two columns illegally extracted from San Giorgio in Velabro. See R.T. Ridley, The Pope’s Archaeologist: the Life and Times of Carlo Fea (Rome, 2000), 228.

8. For the following see, as CRS, Camerlengio II (IV), 188.

9. Depoletti (1779–1854), a student of Pompeo Batoni, became a mosaicist, then learned ceramic restoration at Naples, for which he became famous all over Europe.


11. Catalogo di sette antichità etrusche trovate negli scavi del Principe di Cantù 1828–1829 (Viterbo, 1829). There is a charming history of the excavations on p. 171: two disloyal agents by chance found Etruscan vases early in 1828 near Cucumella, and sold them to Dorow. The Princess obtained a licence to excavate in October; the Prince himself was at that time totally occupied in his astronomy with the Herschell telescope. By the time he arrived in December, the finds had already been transferred to the palazzo of Cav. Valenti. In four months, more than 2,000 objects had been found.

12. See A. Pietromarchi, Luciano Bonaparte (Modena, 1980), 301ff.; for Stendhal, Correspondence X (Paris, 1927–), 240–1. Some will notice how much the account of all these events in the archives is completely at variance with the accounts to be found in biographical references on the enlightened aristocrat, so devoted to science. Most notably, in 1995 there appeared a volume, Luciano Bonaparte, le sue collezioni d’arte, le sue residenze a Roma, nel Lazio, in Italia (1804–1840) (Rome, 1995), containing a long chapter by F. Buranelli: ‘Gli scavi a Vulci 1828–1854 di Luciano ed Alessandrina Bonaparte’, 81–218. Buranelli is an archival scholar of great experience, but what he chose to report from these records is completely different from my own findings from the same sources. He reconstructed the excavations, the finds, and their dispersal, but said nothing of the human side of these events, least of all Cantù’s materialism and ruthlessness, not to say criminal behaviour. The Commissione is mentioned only on pp. 88–92.
Buranelli stressed rather Canino's 'scientific rigour and method' and his fine 'laboratory for reconstruction' (p. 84), the marvellous detail and speed of his catalogues (p. 86). It is even suggested that the Commissione could work with 'greater calm' in the Palazzo Gabrielli (p. 89). Economic motives are only alluded to (p. 82), although it is admitted that the scattering of the finds in so many locations was to facilitate their sale (p. 89) — so were the catalogues. The main motive was in fact to impede as far as possible accurate evaluation by the Commissione.

13. ASR, Camerlengato II (IV), 208,1326.
14. For the excavations at Bomarzo, north of the town in the angle between the Tiber and the Vezza, see Bullist (1830), 234; (1832), 195; (1834), 50; G. Dennis, The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria 1 (London, 1848 and 1907), 258–71 (in the Everyman edition of 1907), who mentioned these finds; A. Testa, Candelabri e fiammette (Rome, 1989), 5 — the acquired candelabra are nos. 53 and 55.
16. Heurgon, 'La dénouvel des Etrusques' (above, n. 1).
18. Falconi Amarelli, Vellei (above, n. 2).
Author/s: RIDLEY, RT

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